

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 211

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 78

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 211—Relative to the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 28, 2004.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 211, Mountjoy. The 200th Anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition.

This measure would call on all Californians to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition, which began on May 14, 1804.

WHEREAS, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led the first overland exploration of the American West beginning on May 14, 1804, and ending on September 23, 1806; and

WHEREAS, President Thomas Jefferson, in the American spirit of exploration, ordered the expedition to explore the new territory of the Louisiana Purchase, determine the existence of a Northwest Passage, make peaceful contact with Native Americans, and bring back new scientific knowledge; and

WHEREAS, The Corps of Discovery Expedition was comprised of 48 men when it left St. Louis on May 21, 1804, including hunters, soldiers, French boatmen, an African-American named York, who the Native Americans nick-named “Big Medicine,” and many other adventurers; and

WHEREAS, York played an important role and was vital to the success of the mission, and as an accomplished hunter, he was key to developing relationships with the Native American tribes encountered by the corps; and

WHEREAS, During their first year of travel, the Corps of Discovery Expedition followed President Jefferson’s direction to travel up the Missouri River to its headwaters in the Rocky Mountains. The expedition spent its first winter in present-day North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, The second year of travel was more challenging as the corps moved into lands unknown to nonnatives. They brought with them a guide, a Native American woman named Sacagawea, along with her French-Canadian husband and their infant son. Her contribution to the expedition was invaluable as Lewis and Clark established friendly relations with the native people they encountered along the way; and



WHEREAS, The corps struggled to find a pass over the Continental Divide and received help from the Nez Perce Tribe in finding the Snake River, which eventually led them to the Columbia River; and

WHEREAS, The expedition reached the Pacific Ocean near present-day Astoria, Oregon in November 1805; and

WHEREAS, The return journey to St. Louis began in March 1806 and was filled with its own unique discoveries as Lewis and Clark split up to cover more territory. The two groups reunited in August and reached St. Louis on September 23, 1806; and

WHEREAS, President Jefferson and the American people warmly welcomed Lewis and Clark home and thanked them for their achievements. They had brought home journals, maps, and plants and animals that provided invaluable information as America moved West. They had established peaceful contact with many Native American tribes, and they set a precedent that showed the importance of government-sponsored exploration; and

WHEREAS, The Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition opened up the American West, and, although they did not come to California, they opened the way for adventurous Americans who would eventually follow when the Gold Rush began less than 50 years later; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature calls on all Californians to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition, which began on May 14, 1804, and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

